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OUR FIRST-COUSINS.

Who does not know 'Sally' at the Zoo? This great educated Chimpanzee has been taught by her keeper to do many things which excite the wonder of the gaping crowd around her cage, the onlookers being especially surprised to see that she is able to count up to five. We have seen dogs taught apparently to count much larger amounts, and elephants are credited with considerable powers of calculation untaught; but we always expect more of the Quadrumania, because of their close simulation of humanity, and their possession of those adaptable hands, which we are accustomed to regard as the special symbols of capability.

There is, however, something 'uncanny' in the hand of a monkey; it is held out to you with such an air of demand; there is nothing deprecatory or beseeching about the action; it is always imperative; and if you, by mistake, seize it in friendliness, as that of a man and a brother, it is generally snatched from you with an angry chatter, as much as to say: 'I want none of your sentiment. Give!' It is not always food that is demanded, but something, no matter what, to gratify their acquisitiveness or love of mischief.

We once unintentionally excited the anger of a monkey at the Zoo by giving it something to which it had not been accustomed. In searching for scraps to put into the provision bag for a party of young people who were accompanying us to see the animals, we came across some macaroni, and the thought struck us that probably the monkeys might like it; and so some of them did; others did not attempt to eat it, but held it up to their eyes like a spyglass, to look through the little hole, then broke it, and examined each piece minutely. But a little girl of our party offered a piece to a monkey, who took it, tasted it, and did not like it; whereupon his fury knew no bounds: he seemed to think the child had intentionally insulted him, or had perhaps intended to poison him. He rushed at her, chattering, and trying to seize her

with those nimble fingers; shook the bars of the cage with impotent rage, and followed her all round the room vociferating angrily.

The Hottentots say that baboons can talk, only they will not, for fear they should be made to work; and there certainly is but little work to be got out of those cunning hands. Nevertheless, we read of some baboons who have been taught to do useful work. There was an obituary notice a year or more ago in all the Cape papers of one of these trained baboons, well known in the colony, who used to act as signalman on the railway, in place of his master, who was lame. The story was doubted by the English papers, who copied it; but we have met with many people who had seen the animal at his work. Mrs Carey Hobson, too, in one of her pleasant little 'South African Stories,' tells of a baboon who had come under her own notice, who had been taught to ride after a Dutch Boer as groom, and to dismount and hold the horse by sitting on the bridle when his master went into a house; and we have seen a troupe of monkeys of various kinds taught to do a great many curious tricks; but in these, again, they have been rivalled by dogs.

The monkeys we see in the streets are not usually interesting specimens; they jump about, crack nuts, and amuse children, and thus draw coppers from the pockets of mammas and nurses; but sometimes they show some originality. We were greatly interested, one day lately, by watching one of them. It was quite a small monkey, evidently young, and very active. Some one had given him a paper-bag; this he investigated minutely, picked out every crumb carefully, then tried to put it on his head as a cap; but suddenly an idea came to him. At a little distance there was a fox terrier barking at him; so Jacko thought he would try to frighten him. Seizing the paper-bag in his teeth so as to hide his face, he crept towards the dog on all-fours, and then jumped at him. The success of the manoeuvre was complete; the dog turned, and ran away down an area with his tail between his

legs. Then the monkey skipped with delight, and proceeded to try the same experiment upon a cat, who lay basking on a window ledge. Climbing the area rails, he jumped most skilfully on the hindlegs (or hands!) over the spikes till he came opposite the cat, and sat down before her, still holding the paper-bag between his teeth. But the cat was not so easily frightened; she only made a hasty movement forwards and crouched, ready to spring. So the monkey sat still, apparently indifferent, put the paper-bag on his head, and tried to tempt the cat by swinging his tail in front of her, evidently prepared for a bit of fun; but the master not wishing to encourage a squabble, pulled the string, and made him return to his perch upon the organ. There was certainly originality in that monkey, as well as the usual love of mischief, notwithstanding the air of repression which must inevitably surround these little ministers to the poor organ-man's pocket. Apropos of which, we were told of one monkey who sought for a penny which had fallen unobserved, held it up to show the donor, whom he discriminated among many spectators, that he had found it, and then climbed up and put it in his master's pocket.

We have often wondered whether these street monkeys are kindly treated; but an incident we witnessed would seem to show that they are often petted and cared for almost like children. An Italian woman had a monkey and an organ, in the front of which was the monkey's bed. The little creature being tired, began to pull aside the covering, which the woman perceiving, immediately left off her organ-grinding, opened the bed carefully, and then placed the monkey in it as tenderly as though it had been a baby, fondling it and kissing it as she laid its head upon the pillow; and the way in which it received the caresses, and then shut its eyes and went off to sleep contentedly, was absurdly human.

Whatever may be the intelligence of tame or domesticated monkeys and baboons, the measure of their capacity must be judged by their actions in a state of nature. It has often been said that baboons will sit and warm themselves at a fire, but cannot be taught to put on a stick to keep it alight. Emin Pasha, however, declares he has seen them carrying torches; but most people think he must have mistaken the dwarf aborigines for baboons. The following account, however, given by an eye-witness, shows a wonderful amount of intelligent cunning in a wild baboon, even to the point of counting to a small extent.

As is well known, baboons always have a leader, whom they obey implicitly. A troop of baboons, led by an old male of great size, had for a long time done much mischief in a certain mountainous district of Cape Colony, so it was determined to shoot the leader. It was easy to resolve, but not so easy to do; for at the most distant sight of a man with a gun, the whole troop would vanish; whilst for unarmed men they cared nothing. The leader would march down the mountain defiantly, with a large bough in his hand, which he used as a stick, followed by the whole tribe, and commit terrible depredations in gardens and vineyards, destroy-

ing much more than they ate, but always keeping at a respectful distance from anything like an ambush. At last the farmers round determined to build a wall in a vineyard, and shoot the enemy from behind it. The wall was built, the baboons watching the operation from a safe distance, and coming down when the workmen were gone, to examine it minutely. It seemed also as though they were in the habit of counting; for if, by way of experiment, one man remained behind, no baboon ever put in an appearance. But at last man, the tyrant, contrived by superior cunning to outwit the baboon, who had certainly shown himself to be no ignoble foe. By introducing behind the sheltering wall an extra number of watchers, in batches of two or three at a time, with carefully-concealed guns, and then sending away the usual number, and repeating this manoeuvre several times, they succeeded in fairly puzzling the baboon, and were able to retain two armed men, until the leader, believing he had seen all his enemies safely off the premises, led his troop to raid as usual, and was shot dead; his followers rushing away helter-skelter in consternation, and carrying off the young to a place of safety.

It is not always, however, that monkeys and baboons forsake a wounded comrade. They will moan and weep over the dying in a manner so intensely human, that hunters used at one time to avoid shooting them, looking upon it as little short of murder. Especially is this the case when there are females with their young ones. If the mother be shot, the little one will cling about her, weeping like a human baby, will dip its hand in the blood and hold it up imploringly; whilst a wounded monkey will try to stanch the blood with its hand or with leaves, all the time crying and groaning in a way which is most distressing to a tender-hearted sportsman.

But of late, the depredations of baboons at the Cape among the lambs, which they catch and rip open in order to drink the milk found in the stomach, have hardened the hearts of the farmer against them; and he shoots them without compunction, especially as they now begin to eat the flesh of their victims, and seem likely, as in the case of the Kea parrot of New Zealand, to become true carnivora, instead of, as formerly, eaters of fruit and insects only.

DUMARESQ'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER VIII.—GETTING ON.

It must be frankly confessed that Linnell took an unconscionably long time in painting in the figure of that bewitching Arab girl in the foreground of his graceful Algerian picture. He arranged and rearranged the drapery and the pose till Psyche herself was fairly astonished at the exacting requirements of high art. Perhaps he had reasons of his own for being in no hurry over his self-imposed task: at anyrate, he loitered lovingly over every touch and every detail, and filled in the minutest points of the flesh-tints with even more than his customary conscientious minuteness. Psyche, too, for her part, seemed to like very well her novel trade

of artist's model. 'Are you tired yet?' Linnell asked her more than once, as they sat in the gloom of the bare little dining-room at the Wren's Nest together; and Psyche answered always with a smile of half-childish surprise: 'Oh dear, no, Mr Linnell; not the least in the world. I could sit like this and be painted for ever.'

To say the truth, she had never before known she was so beautiful. Linnell could idealise female heads against any man; and Psyche's pretty head came out on his canvas so glorified by the halo of first love that she hardly recognised her own counterfeit presentment. 'Do you always take so much pains with your sitters?' she asked once, as the painter paused and regarded attentively some shade of expression on her lips and eyebrows. And Linnell smiled a broad smile as he answered truthfully: 'Not unless I think my sitter very well worth it.'

'And in the East, who do you get to sit for you?' Psyche asked, looking up at him with those big liquid eyes of hers.

'Nobody so well worth painting as you,' the artist answered with a faint touch of his brush on the eye in the picture—he had just managed to catch the very light he wanted in it. 'Dancing-girls mostly, who sit for money, or Nubians sometimes, who don't veil their features. But in Lower Egypt and in Algiers, of course, you can't get most of the respectable women to show you their faces at all for love or money.'

Psyche hesitated for a moment; then she said timidly: 'Nobody has ever painted Papa. Don't you think some day there ought to be a portrait of him?'

Linnell started. 'Do you mean to say,' he cried, with a fresh burst of surprise, 'there's no portrait of him at all anywhere in existence?'

'Not even a photograph,' Psyche answered with a faint shake of her pretty head. 'He won't be taken. He doesn't like it. He says a world that won't read his books can't be very anxious to look at his outer features. But I think there ought to be a portrait painted of him somewhere, for all that. I look to the future. In after-ages, surely, people will like to know what so great a man as Papa looked like.'

'Then you have no fear for his fame?' Linnell asked, half smiling.

'None at all,' Psyche answered with quiet dignity. 'Of course, Mr Linnell, I don't pretend to understand his philosophy and all that sort of thing; but I don't think I should be worthy to be my father's daughter if I didn't see that, in spite of the world's neglect and want of appreciation, a man with so grand a character as Papa must let his soul go out in books which can never be forgotten.'

'I don't think you would,' Linnell murmured very low. 'And one of the things I like best about you, Psyche, is that you appreciate your father so thoroughly. It shows, as you say, you're not unworthy to be so great a man's daughter.'

He had never called her Psyche before, but he called her so now quite simply and unaffectedly; and Psyche, though it brought the warm blood tingling into her cheek, took no overt notice of the bold breach of conventional etiquette. She preferred that Linnell should call her so, unasked,

rather than formally ask for leave to use the more familiar form in addressing her.

'Papa would make a splendid portrait, too,' she said wistfully after a moment's pause.

'He would,' Linnell assented. 'I never in my life saw a nobler head. If only somebody could be got somewhere who was good enough to do it.'

'Wouldn't you care to try?' Psyche asked with an outburst.

Linnell hesitated. 'It isn't my line,' he said. 'I can manage grace and delicate beauty, I know, but not that rugged masculine grandeur. I'm afraid I should fail to do my sitter justice.'

'Oh, I don't think so at all,' Psyche cried with some warmth. 'You appreciate Papa. You admire him. You understand him. You recognise the meaning of the lines in his face. I think, myself, nobody could do it as well as you could.' And she looked up at him almost pleadingly.

'You really mean it?' Linnell exclaimed, brightening up. She was but an inexperienced country girl, yet her opinion of his art gave him more profound self-confidence than Sydney Colvin's or Comyns Carr's could possibly have done. He needed encouragement and the frank note of youthful certainty. 'No art critic so cocksure as a girl in her teens. If you think I could do it,' he went on after a pause, still working hard at the light in the left eye, 'I should be proud to try my inexperienced hand at it. I should go down to posterity, in that case, if for nothing else, at least as the painter of the only genuine and authentic portrait of Haviland Dumaresq.'

'You share my enthusiasm,' Psyche said with a smile.

'I do,' the painter answered, looking over at her intently. 'And indeed, I can sympathise with your enthusiasm doubly. In the first place, I admire your father immensely; and in the second place—he paused for a moment, then he added reverently—'I had a mother myself once. Nothing that anybody could ever have said would have seemed to me too much to say about my dear mother.'

'Did you ever paint her?' Psyche asked, with a quietly sympathetic tinge in her voice.

Linnell shook his head. 'Oh no,' he said. 'She died before I was old enough to paint at all.—But,' he added after a pause, in his most hesitating tone, 'I've a little miniature of her here, if you'd like to see it.'

'I should like it very much,' Psyche said softly. 'Nothings! nothings! yet oh, how full of meaning when sweet seventeen says them, with pursed-up lips and blushing cheeks, to admiring thirty.'

The painter put his hand inside the breast of his coat and drew out a miniature in a small gold frame, hung round his neck by a black silk ribbon. He handed it to Psyche. The girl gazed close at it, long and hard. It was the portrait of a graceful, gracious, gentle old lady, her smooth white hair surmounted by a dainty lace head-dress, and her soft eyes, so like Linnell's own, instinct with a kindly care and sweetness. Yet there was power, too, rare intellectual power in the ample dome of that tall white forehead; and strength of will, most unlike her son's, stood confessed in the firm chin and the marked contour of the old lady's cheeks. It must surely have

been from 'Charlie'—that scapegrace 'Charlie'—that Linnell inherited the weaker half of his nature: in the mother's traits, as set forth by the miniature, there showed no passing line of mental or moral weakness.

'She must have been a very great lady indeed,' Psyche cried, looking close at it.

'Oh no; not at all. She was only a singer—a public singer,' Linnell answered truthfully. 'But she sang as I never heard any other woman sing in all my days; and she lived a life of pure unselfishness.'

'Tell me about her,' Psyche said simply.

Her pretty sympathy touched the painter's sensitive nature to the core. His eyes brimmed full, and his hand trembled on the lashes of the face in the picture, but he pretended to go on with it still unabashed. 'I can't tell you much,' he said, trying hard to conceal his emotion from his sitter, 'but I can tell you a little. She was a grand soul. I owe to her whatever there may be of good, if any, within me.'

'An American, I suppose?' Psyche went on musingly, as she read the name and date in the corner, 'Boston, 1870.'

'No, not an American: thank Heaven, not that: a Devonshire girl: true Briton to the bone. She was proud of Devonshire, and she loved it always. But she went away to America with my father of her own accord in her effort to redress a great wrong—a great wrong my father had unwittingly been forced, by the cruelty and treachery of others, into inflicting unawares on an innocent woman—a woman who hated her, and for whom she would willingly have sacrificed everything. I can't tell you the whole story—at least not now.

—Perhaps'— And he paused. Then he added more slowly: 'No, no; no, never. But I can tell you this much in general terms: my father had been deceived by his father—a wicked old man, my mother said, and my mother was a woman to be believed implicitly—my father had been deceived by a terrible lie into inflicting this cruel and irreparable wrong upon that other woman and a helpless child of hers. My mother, who already had suffered bitterly at his hands—for my father was a very weak man, though kind and well-meaning—my mother found it out, and determined to make what reparation was possible to her for that irretrievable evil. She never thought of herself. She never even vindicated her own position. She stole away to America, and was as if she were dead: there, she toiled and slaved, and built up a livelihood for us in a strange way, and wished that half of all she had earned should belong in the end to that other woman and her innocent child—the woman that hated her. Through good report and evil report she worked on still: she kept my father straight, as no other woman could ever have kept him; she brought me up tenderly and well; and when she died she left it to me as a sacred legacy to undo as far as in me lay the evil my grandfather and father had wrought between them—one by his wickedness, the other by his weakness. I don't suppose you can understand altogether what I mean; but I daresay you can understand enough to know why I loved and revered and adored my mother.'

'I can understand all, I think,' Psyche murmured low, 'and I don't know why I should be

afraid to say so.' With any other woman, the avowal might have sounded unwomanly: with Psyche, girt round in her perfect innocence, it sounded but the natural and simple voice of human sympathy.

Events take their colour from the mind that sees them. There are no such things as facts: there are only impressions. The story old Admiral Rolt had bluntly blurted out at the Senior United Service to General Maitland was the self-same story that Linnell, in his delicate obscure half-hints, had faintly shadowed forth that day to Psyche; only the mode of regarding the events differed. Between the two, each mind must make its own choice for itself. To the pure all things are pure; and to Admiral Rolt the singer of beautiful songs and the mother that Linnell so loved and revered envisaged herself only as a common music-hall ballet-girl. How far the scene at the Deanery and the Irish brogue were embellishments of the Admiral's own fertile genius, nobody now living could probably say. On the Admiral's tongue, no story lost for want of amplification. Perhaps the truth lay somewhere between the two extremes; but Linnell's was at least the nobler version, and bespoke the nobler mind at the back of it.

They paused for a moment or two in utter silence. Then Linnell spoke again. 'Why do I make you the confidante of this little family episode?' he asked dreamily.

'I suppose,' Psyche answered, looking up at him with something of her father's bold open look, 'because you knew you were sure of finding friendly sympathy.'

Their eyes met, and then fell suddenly. A strange tremor ran through Linnell's nerves. Was this indeed in very truth that woman who could love him for his own soul, apart from filthy lucre and everything else of the earth, earthly?

He looked up again, and hastening to change the conversation, asked of a sudden: 'How can I get your father to sit for me, I wonder?'

He was afraid to trust his own heart any further.

Psyche's eyes came back from infinity with a start. 'Oh, he'd never sit,' she cried. 'You can't do it that way. We must make up some plan to let you see him while you pretend to be painting something else, and he doesn't suspect it. You must get your studies for it while he knows nothing about it.'

'He might come in here while I paint you,' Linnell suggested with faint indecision, 'and then I could put one canvas behind another.'

A slight cloud came over Psyche's brow. It was so much nicer to be painted tête-à-tête with only an occasional discreet irruption from Geraldine Maitland, who sat for the most part reading French novels on the tiny grass plot outside the open window. 'I think,' she said, after a slight pause, 'we might manage to concoct some better plot with Geraldine.'

There's nothing on earth to bind two young people together at a critical stage like concocting a plot. Before that surreptitious portrait of Haviland Dumaresq was half finished—the old man being engaged in conversation outside by Geraldine, while Linnell within caught his features rapidly—the painter and Psyche felt quite at home with one another, and Psyche herself,

though not prone to love affairs, began almost to suspect that Mr Linnell must really and truly be thinking of proposing to her. And if he did—well, Psyche had her own ideas about her answer.

FLAG-SIGNALS AT SEA.

SIGNALLING at sea is a subject of great importance to every maritime nation, and of peculiar interest to the dwellers in our sea-girt isles. British merchant-ships are the principal ocean-carriers to the wide world. The red ensign of our mercantile marine and the St George's cross of the royal navy may be met with wherever it is possible for a ship to penetrate. We all scan eagerly the shipping news in the columns of our daily paper when friends are on their way to woo fickle fortune at the antipodes, on India's sunny shores, among the orange groves of malarial Florida, or in the fertile fields of Manitoba. The good ship bearing our loved ones sights another, under press of canvas, hurrying homeward across the trackless expanse of waters which joins the nations it divides. The passengers seeking new lands hasten on deck to gaze with mingled feelings at the strange ship heading for the land they love, but have been compelled to leave by sheer stress of numbers. It almost seems a second parting, and opens once again old wounds that time, the great healer, has not yet completely cured. Will they ever see the old homestead or the spires of their native town again? Would that she might heave-to for letters! This the stranger certainly will not do, as she is making the best of her fair wind, which may fail at any moment.

Nautical men, however, have conferred a lasting benefit upon their descendants by providing for such a contingency. Soon the curious passengers observe signals made from ship to ship by means of displays of various combinations of coloured flags of different shapes, which flutter in the breeze, and give the ships quite a holiday appearance; whereas previously they were as gloomy as a hearse, with not a glint of colour about their upper works. The signals are as unintelligible as cuneiform characters to the land-folk who are without the key. Information conveyed in this way is of universal application. If the homeward-bounder had been a foreigner, the signals would have been as readily understood. Each captain may perchance be utterly ignorant of the other's language. If they were on shore, conversation would only be possible through the medium of an interpreter, who would be master of the situation. English and French captains are seldom able to converse in any language but their own; Scandinavians and Germans are often polyglots. All barriers of race and tongue are swept away by the symbolic system of intercommunication. How is this? The answer is simple. Every ship is supplied with a key, or signal-book, containing the meaning of each signal arranged in dictionary form. These keys are printed in the language of the nation to which the respective ships belong. As we shall explain below, similar flags, bearing the names of the consonants, are used by all nations; and a signal-book of one nation is a translation in duplicate of that of another. Hence each captain speaks in

his own tongue by the flags; and the signal-book affords a direct translation.

The two ships proceed upon their opposite courses, and are soon hidden each from the other beneath the line of sea and sky by the intervening hill of waters. But this interchange of signals, or speaking at sea as it is otherwise termed, bears fruit. In a little while the homeward-bound vessel arrives at her destination; thereupon, her master sends a report to the *London Shipping Gazette* or to the *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, and it soon filters into the dailies. Hearts at home are made more restful when anxious ones read that the barque *Glenlora*, bound from London to New Zealand, was spoken by the screw steamer *Tainui* in four degrees north twenty-eight degrees west. All well! This is especially welcome intelligence, when it is known that soon after she set sail a cruel cyclone crossed the Bay of Biscay just about the time when she was in those latitudes.

This is looking at the benefits of signalling from the point of view of passengers and their friends. How does it affect the mariners who man the merchant fleets of all nations? Dr Johnson has cynically defined a ship as a prison, with a chance thrown in of being drowned. We are not altogether of his opinion, but rather agree with the old sailor who gave up shore-service in disgust with its sameness. Some seamen, however, experience a certain sense of solitary confinement while making a long passage in a sailing-ship, be she ever so well built, manned, and provisioned. Charles Reade, in one of his realistic novels, has shown that deprivation of communication with our fellows is the curse of the solitary system. It is somewhat similar at sea. Our yarns become frayed out by spinning, our songs become monotonous, and the tame tournaments instituted for the amusement of the passengers fail to charm us. Even the excitement of a man overboard would be some relief from the daily routine. Gladly we avail ourselves of the presence of a strange ship to indulge in the mild dissipation of a friendly chat, by the aid of our deaf-and-dumb alphabet, where flags are substituted for fingers. What is her name? Where is she from? Whither bound? How many days out? When did she lose the trade-wind? All these and many more interrogatories may be administered to the stranger some three miles distant. Her duly deciphered answers form the theme of conversation for hours. She takes her turn at asking questions; and, like Oliver Twist, is not afraid to ask for more. Distance puts an end to the palaver; ensigns are lowered as the symbol of farewell; and we are once more alone, with nought in sight save sea and sky.

The total number of questions and answers which can be hoisted depends entirely upon the speed with which ships are separating, and the readiness of the persons signalling to determine the flags and pick out their meaning in the signal-book. It must be understood that wind is absolutely necessary to keep the flags spread out, as otherwise they would be indistinguishable. Talleyrand said that speech was given us to conceal our thoughts. This diplomatic dictum is untenable in the speaking of ships at sea. Occasionally, by accident, the signals get rather mixed. A short time ago, the harbour-master at Cape Town was

alarmed by the display of the two-flag signal NP at the mast-head of the screw steamer *Clan Gordon*. This, being interpreted, meant, 'Fire gains rapidly; take people off.' The steamer was partly laden with dynamite, so there was but little time to spare. He signalled her to heave up anchor, and hastened to her aid with a tug-boat. It was a *lapsus linguae* of the quartermaster, who had hoisted the flags. He had inverted their order. The hoist should have been PN, 'Want a steam-tug,' and no one was more surprised than he. Such a mistake would have been fatal in the following instance. Two ships were wending their way through the intricacies of the Torres Strait reefs. They were sailing in Indian file, the ship of lighter draught being ahead. She grazed a coral patch, could not stop, but quickly ran up KV, 'Starboard your helm.' Had she hoisted VK, her consort would have left her ribs to bleach upon the coral patch.

Quickness of signalling is sometimes the saving of life. The *Padishah*, Captain W. J. Minns, was in company with the Glasgow ship *Jessie Readman*, on the 21st of August 1883, in the northern tropic. Suddenly the Glasgow vessel hoisted her ensign, union down, and the flags HM, 'Man overboard.' Captain Minns steered into her wake, sighted the man, lowered a boat, picked up the shivering seaman, and within forty minutes hoisted, 'Man picked up; send a boat.' Signalling and seamanship had rescued a fellow-creature from a watery grave. He had fallen from aloft while reefing topsails.

Signalling by means of coloured flags has been of very slow growth. Permutation of numbered flags as a method of giving and obtaining information at sea was introduced not quite a hundred years ago. Previously, each flag was used singly, and its significance varied with the position of the ship at which it was shown. The same flag if hoisted at the main would convey a meaning different from that intended when displayed at the fore, or even in the rigging. The gallant Kempfenfels in 1780 had advanced to the use of flag symbols in pairs, but after a plan of his own. This was in the good old days when long voyages were *de rigueur*. Then the first news received by our forefathers with respect to the condition and whereabouts of their absent argosies was when they saw them entering a home port. High-pressure life was the exception, and the latest information was not so essential to the conduct of big 'booms' or cotton 'corners.' Steam-power and electricity have much to answer for in this respect.

Speaking ships at sea by flag symbols, as at present carried out, is one of the peace triumphs of the Victorian half-century. The international code of signals, formulated by a Committee appointed by the Board of Trade in 1855, met with general favour, and ultimately superseded the many codes which were held in more or less esteem. Ships belonging to the same nation were often unable to converse owing to the fact that different codes were in use on board of them. The confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel was insignificant in comparison with that which hitherto had prevailed in transmitting messages at sea. Now, the ships of every maritime nation employ the same code. The Committee carefully considered such systems as had been from time to time

in use in both British and foreign shipping. They found that none of them fulfilled the more modern requirements of mariners, and drew up a code by adopting the best features of several. Our comprehensive, simple, and inexpensive code is the result of their labours. Eighteen flags of various shapes and colours were adopted as sufficient for all purposes of signalling at sea. They express the intended meaning by combining two, three, or four flags in different order. Each permutation of two or more flags forms a complete signal in itself, to which an arbitrary but invariable significance has been allotted in the signal-book. The eighteen flags give 306 permutations when hoisted two at a time, 4896 in hoists of three, and 73,440 in hoists of four at a time. Hence, altogether there are 78,642 different orders in which the eighteen flags can be arranged as distinct signals, without hoisting fewer than two, or more than four flags at one time! This number is sufficient for all practical purposes. The meaning of each signal is given in the signal-book immediately over against the letters represented by the flags hoisted.

The International Code consists of a swallow-tailed burgee, four triangular pennants, and thirteen square flags. Each of these flags bears the name of a consonant, merely to distinguish them for convenience of reference. Vowels were not used, for the curious but cogent reason that by introducing them every objectionable word composed of four letters in any language would appear in the code in the course of altering the arrangement of the letters of the alphabet. The burgee B is red. C, D, F are pennants: a red ball on white ground, a white ball on blue ground, and a white ball on red ground, respectively. G is a pennant with yellow inner and blue outer half. Square flags are: H, a red and a white stripe, both vertical; J, blue, white, and blue, horizontal stripes; K, a yellow and a blue stripe, both vertical; L, divided into two blue and two yellow checkers; M, blue with white diagonals; N, eight blue and eight white checkers; P, a white central square with blue border; Q, all yellow; R, red with yellow cross; S, blue central square with white border; T, a red, a white, and a blue stripe, all vertical; V, white with red diagonals; W, red central square bordered by white, and that again by blue. An extra answering pennant of five vertical stripes, alternately red and white, is also used. With the above explanation, it would be easy for any of our readers to construct drawings of the flags for themselves.

A few examples selected from actual work will explain more clearly the method of using flag signals. The International Code is supplied to lightships, lighthouses, and signal stations along the coasts of civilised countries and their dependencies. Perim Light Station, at the entrance to the Red Sea, is a sequestered spot, and the keeper, conversant with flag language, is glad to communicate with passing ships. We remember a large steamship passing, and her master observed three successive signals made by the light-keeper: FDKN (When shall I) QCP (be) DQLW (relieved)? The tired watcher must have been disappointed on seeing the ship run up RWQ (Unknown). Once when homeward-bound from the East Indies, we had signalled and left astern another sailing-ship. Shortly afterwards our maintopsail yard broke;

The modern side by comprehension result shapes or all less the tree, or initiation signal in significance. They hoisted 73,440 together with the signals, more than sufficient of each to indicate the flags.

swallow and thir ours the them are not what by full command would bring the . The a red a ground, only. G the outer stripe, horizontal a vertical yellow bars; N, a white yellow; square a blue diagonals; te, and pennant white, ion, it construct

ark will flag lied to along dependence keeper, immuni a large d three FDKN lieved)? nted on Once lies, we gship, broke;

sail was shortened, and our friend soon overhauled us. BGH (Has any accident happened?) quickly fluttered at his mizen peak. We replied by JLV (Mainsail yard) JKR (gone in the slings); and her master was almost as wise as we were. Then he favoured us with HVF (Do you require assistance?) and BQG (Shall we keep company?), both of which were answered negatively. Then BPW (Do you wish to be reported?). Our captain's answer was PQG (Report me to my owners). Our ensigns again dipped farewell, and she was soon out of sight ahead. We were wroth to think that such a slow sailer had the advantage; but, strange to say, we arrived in the Downs first, and were thus able to report speaking her.

In signals made with two flags, the burgee uppermost represents Attention; thus, BD (What ship is that?). Pennant uppermost is compass signal; DB, east. Square flag uppermost points out danger; PT, Want a pilot.

In signals composed of four flags, the burgee uppermost is geographical; thus, BFQT, Edinburgh. Pennant uppermost is used in spelling a name or a word of which there is a doubt. Thus, to spell 'Chambers' would involve four hoists: CBKG (Ch), CBDW (am), CBGS (be), CFJW (rs). This is rather a tedious operation, owing to the fact of the absence of vowels, as explained above. Square flag uppermost is ship's name, JSHG, *Tainui* of Glasgow.

Three-flag signals express latitude, longitude, time, and all ordinary communications, of which we have given several selections.

Signal flags can only be depended upon when their colours can be made out, and a code for such an emergency is given at the end of the signal-book. The mercantile marine has no such historical signal as that which Nelson hoisted on board the *Victory* at Trafalgar; but we have confined our illustrations to our merchant-ship signals, in the belief that peace has victories also.

THE RING AND THE BIRD.

CHAPTER II.

The effect of the parrot's query was startling. Colonel Farrer started up in such haste that his chair fell clattering to the ground, and with such a pallor overspreading his ruddy countenance that all of us with one accord stood up too, and cried out, 'What's the matter?'

'What did that brute mean?' gasped the Colonel. 'What does it know about Ram Asoka? I didn't want to kill the old fool, if only he had been sensible, and not made such a confounded fuss about his heathen temple. It was a judicial execution; it was necessary to the peace of the district. I didn't want to do it, if Ram Asoka hadn't brought it on himself.'

'Perhaps, Colonel,' said I, 'it would be a good thing if Polly were to give us his version of the affair.'

From white the Colonel's aspect changed to yellow. 'Sh! What? What do you mean?' he exclaimed. 'Are you jesting? It's no joke, I tell you. The native papers, confound them, said—and they pay too much attention to native opinion nowadays. And—Will no one stop that abominable bird!'

For the parrot was so delighted with his *coup* that he had burst into a shriek of wild laughter, in which I seemed to detect a tone of mocking triumph.

'Agatha, do take the bird away,' said Mrs Gretton; and Polly was taken down-stairs and immured in his cage, still laughing in that grim and fiendish fashion.

'But now, Colonel,' said Mrs Gretton when the hubbub had ceased, 'do tell us all about Ram Asoka.'

I could see that the subject did not please the Colonel; but as a matter of fact he had not the courage to refuse to speak on it. His story was so incoherent, so full of explanations and excuses, that—taken in conjunction with subsequent events—it roused in me a curiosity to read the accounts of the affair which were given in those native papers the Colonel so disliked. From their statements it appeared that Colonel Farrer had been sent to investigate a quarrel between the Buddhist and Mohammedan residents in an out-of-the-way village. The Mohammedans wanted to draw water from a well which the Buddhists regarded as sacred to their god; and religious feeling had been somewhat strained. The Colonel's instructions were to declare the well public property, and he was provided with soldiers, who were ordered to see that the Mussulmans were not interfered with when they approached the spring. The matter might easily have been settled on the basis of a compromise suggested by Ram Asoka, the Buddhist priest, who only asked the Mohammedans to avoid the well till the water necessary for the use of the temple had been drawn each day. This arrangement had been all but completed when the Colonel arrived; but instead of giving his assent to it, he chose to take up the Mohammedan cause with quite unnecessary zeal, moved chiefly, it was said, by a desire to sack the Buddhist temple, which contained, among other more modest treasures, a large and valuable ruby, traditionally supposed to have fallen from heaven at the feet of the chief idol in the place. The Colonel and his men entered the temple, destroyed the idols, and killed Ram Asoka on the steps of his desecrated altar; after which the Colonel stooped and took from the priest's dead hand the priceless ruby he had vainly tried to save. It is more than possible that the native papers exaggerated Colonel Farrer's guilt; but it is certain that the odium he incurred on this expedition made his resignation advisable; and it did look rather bad that after his motives for appropriating it had been so sharply impugned, he should have retained and set in a ring the stone he had taken from Ram Asoka.

I need hardly say that the story as told by the Colonel differed in many points from this which I have set down; but his frequently-repeated statement that Ram Asoka brought his death upon himself, his loud declarations that he had a right to keep the ring, were calculated to rouse in any mind not deeply biased in his favour—in mine, for example—a firm conviction that the annexation of the ruby and the execution of its protector could not be justified on any strict reading of the principles of either law or honour. True it was that Mrs Gretton said 'Of course,' and 'Yes, indeed, dear Colonel Farrer,' at every

pause in her guest's narrative ; and that Louisa gave it as her opinion that it was better the stone should be on the Colonel's hand than hidden in an Indian village where no one could see it. But Agatha and I were silent.

'What do you think of the new-comer ?' I asked my sweetheart in the few precious minutes that Mrs Gretton allowed us each evening to say good-night.

'He's a murderous old wretch,' she replied with great promptitude. 'He killed that poor old priest just in order to steal the ruby ; I'm sure of it. But—but—Frank, how is it that Polly knows so much about the affair ?'

'I don't know. That's the queerest thing about the matter. The Colonel hadn't mentioned Ram Asoka when Polly bawled out his very pertinent inquiry. If—if one did believe in the transmigration of souls and the repetition of the Balaam miracle ! But modern Buddhism is sheer humbug. Still, it's funny.'

No doubt I ought to have passed the night awake, musing on the problem of the parrot. But I didn't ; I slept uncommonly well. I think that, speaking generally, one does not get up the proper emotional condition for any event till the event itself is past. Then we are full of retrospective admiration, awe, or fear ; but at the moment did we feel at all ? I think not. I doubt if we could do our work in even passable style if at the moment of action we stopped to think of its nature, or analysed how it might move our souls. Let me admit that I never felt anything to be momentous that ever happened to me, till long after it was over.

I slept sound and late. When I entered the dining-room next morning, Agatha, her aunt, and the Colonel were there, but had not begun breakfast. Agatha and Mrs Gretton were talking aside. As I came in I heard the latter say, 'Well, you can't do anything.' At the same time she handed to Agatha a letter she had been reading, and Agatha hurriedly thrust it into her pocket.

'What is the matter ?' I asked, seeing that my sweetheart looked troubled.

'Oh, nothing !' she answered ; but she left the room, and Mrs Gretton hastened after her.

I felt annoyed that Agatha should not have confided her vexation, whatever it was, to me ; and I wanted to have my annoyance out on somebody. The Colonel was handy.

'That was an interesting story you told us last night, Colonel,' I began. 'It was queer, though, that the parrot should have known so much about it.'

'The parrot ! It knew nothing,' said the Colonel, and I could see he was testy.

'It knew the name of Ram Asoka, which was strange to us all. I rather think we have to thank Polly for the narration of that interesting incident of frontier administration.'

The Colonel grunted.

'We're all rather fond of the bird,' I went on, ostentatiously caressing the parrot, who was standing at the open door of his cage ; 'but you don't seem to appreciate his familiarity with your adventures.'

'Oh ! I don't mind. It—it's rather amusing to have a parrot echoing all you say.'

Polly had echoed nothing, he had taken the

initiative in mentioning our guest's doings ; but that was how the Colonel chose to put it.

To show his liking for the parrot's smartness, he came up to the cage and stretched out his hand to caress it, as I had been doing. But Polly did not take the courtesy as it was meant ; he turned his head and made a vicious dab at the Colonel's hand—at the finger on which he wore the ring. He managed to bite it pretty smartly too ; and the Colonel darted back, uttering many imprecations, to which the parrot replied with equal volubility.

Mrs Gretton and Louisa entered upon this scene, and on learning what had happened, hustled about for bandages and water for the wounded hand. The precious ring, which was fretting the cut Polly had made, was taken off and laid on the mantel-piece ; the finger was tenderly bound up ; and Mrs Gretton herself shut up the parrot in his cage with the assurance that he was 'a naughty, wicked Polly.'

'Who killed Ram Asoka ?' he shrieked defiantly in reply, and even now the Colonel started at the words. 'I think a fiend is in that bird,' he cried.

'I think Ram Asoka is,' I answered. Then I asked for Agatha.

'She has a bad headache. She won't be down to breakfast.'

'Why didn't she tell me that her head ached ?'

'Oh ! don't bother, Mr Laurence ; a headache isn't a deadly malady.—Tea or coffee, Colonel ?'

I was shut up ; but I was cross and bewildered. Agatha might have told me of her headache ; even a very bad headache doesn't make a girl rush out of the room with tears in her eyes and without saying a word to her lover. I hurried through with my breakfast. Before I had finished, I heard the front door close quietly ; and looking out, imagined I saw Agatha's figure passing the window. Mrs Gretton and Louisa exchanged a glance of intelligence.

'Is that Agatha gone out ?' I asked.

'Very likely. The air would do her head good.'

I hurried from the room, neglecting the parrot's plaintive cry, 'Let out Ram Asoka,' and tried to follow her. But before I could overtake her—she was running at a pace that was not good for headaches—she was lost in the bustle of Southampton Row, and I had to betake myself to my office unsatisfied.

I don't think I did much work that day. I know that I was abominably cross, that I bullied my clerk, blotted my letters, and cursed my pens, and even came near to quarrelling with one of my rare clients, who wanted to have an unimportant change made in a house I had designed for him. I wasted my time so well that when at last I controlled my irritation and attended to some matters that could not be delayed, I had to remain at the office till much beyond my usual hour. I got home just about dinner-time, and found the household in the greatest confusion.

'Oh ! Mr Laurence'—Mrs Gretton began, rushing up to me in the hall.

'Where's Agatha ?' I interrupted.

'Agatha ! She's out. But I wanted—'

'Has she been out all day ?'

'No. She came home for lunch, and went out afterwards, just as usual. She'll be in to

dinner.—But, Mr Laurence, the Colonel's ring—his beautiful ruby ring—has disappeared.'

I almost ejaculated, 'What is that to me?' but restrained myself, and asked, 'What has become of it?'

'We don't know. It is terrible! To think of a man like Colonel Farrer, my poor dear husband's friend, being robbed in my house. Oh, what shall I do?' Mrs Gretton began to cry, and her distress pierced the thick crust of my egoism and annoyance.

'Tell me how it happened,' I asked. 'When was the ring missed?'

'Not half an hour ago; but it must have been gone for hours.'

'When did you notice it last?'

'Just after luncheon. It had been lying on the mantel-piece, where I put it when I took it off the Colonel's hand, all the morning. I should have locked it away in some safe place, I know; but in the confusion I didn't think; and I knew Jane to be as honest as the day, though the Colonel declares he'll have her box examined, and she an orphan, and it'll be the ruin of her character.'

'How do you know the ring was on the mantel-piece after luncheon?' I asked judicially, interrupting my landlady's wail.

'Because Louisa took it up and tried it on her finger—only she and Agatha and I were in—and said, "Isn't it lovely?" and Agatha answered, "Yes; I wonder how much money is shut up in that crystal, which almost looks like a great spot of blood?" I remember exactly what she said, because Polly—I can't think what has come to the bird these two days!—caught up her words and began screaming out, "Money! Blood! Blood-money, blood-money!"'

'Polly has brains in his head,' I said with a laugh.

'Oh, Mr Laurence, don't speak like that. The poor Colonel, with his hand hurt and his ring gone! There Polly sat on top of his cage, flapping his wings, and crying out "Blood-money!" till he quite made me nervous, and I was glad to get out of the room.'

'And then?'

'Oh! that's all I know. I went down-stairs to help Jane, and Agatha and Louisa both went out; and when the Colonel, who had been at the War Office or somewhere, came home and remembered his ring, it wasn't to be seen anywhere.'

We had a very uncomfortable dinner that day—cold salmon, cold lamb, cold tart; the cold and stale remains of yesterday's feast, and a deeper coldness and depression weighing on those who ate it. The Colonel's loss did not trouble me; I did not love him well enough for that; but Agatha had not come home to dinner, and her vacant chair was a vexation to my eye. An electric discomfort filled the rest of the party. Mrs Gretton would fain have begun to cry; Louisa looked at her mother with furtive glances of warning and reproof; and poor Jane nearly dropped the Colonel's plate when she met the distrustful glare in his angry eye. Only the parrot, though imprisoned in his cage, kept up a wild hilarity, and laughed and chuckled like a bird possessed.

I left the party still in the dining-room, discussing the missing ring, and retired to a small

room at the back of the hall where I was free to smoke and sulk. Before long I heard a latchkey in the door, and guessed that it was Agatha coming in. I was going out to meet her, but Louisa was before me. She met her cousin in the hall: 'Oh Agatha,' she exclaimed, 'the ring is gone. What's to be done?'

Then Agatha answered in a voice I had never heard from her lips before, a dull despairing wail: 'I couldn't help it, Lou. Will needed the money to-day. I shall get my salary in a day or two, and I thought I could get the ring back then, and neither Frank nor anybody would know.'

Louisa started back with a shocked exclamation.

Agatha hurried towards the staircase; but as she reached it I caught her in my arms. 'My darling, what is the matter?' I exclaimed.

She wrenches herself free. 'I'll tell you tomorrow, Frank; let me alone for to-night.'

She hurried up-stairs; and while I stood hesitating about following her, I heard a confusion of exclamations in the dining-room, and Louisa's voice—did I wrong her in thinking it contained a tone of spiteful satisfaction?—saying, 'She admits it herself. It was for Will's sake Agatha stole the ring.'

SOME INDIAN WEIRD DOINGS.

ONE cannot live long among the natives of India without seeing and hearing things which, as Lord Dundreary would say, 'no fellow can understand.' I mean, things bordering on the preternatural, not to say the supernatural. I know that it is the fashion to pooh-pooh such things. But though one may do this at a distance of thousands of miles from the place where the things are seen, or are heard of from hundreds of eye-witnesses, yet, when one is on the spot itself, the facts stand out so incontestably, that one is forced to admit them, even while one cannot understand, much less explain them. People at a distance on hearing them recounted may talk glibly and superciliously of sleight-of-hand, optical delusion, deception of the senses, tricks of imagination, coincidences, collusion, and so forth. But I repeat that in India such things have occurred, under circumstances which render it absolutely impossible to attribute them, reasonably, to any such causes. Here are a few instances.

The first shall be the verification of a baby rajah's horoscope, which Colonel Meadows Taylor has told us was cast in his presence, and in the events of which he, as Political Resident, took some part. The horoscope was cast and calculated by a learned 'shastri'—the Hindu equivalent of a Doctor in Divinity—at the request of the old rajah, on the birth of his son and heir. The shastri hesitated at first to tell the result, but at length put his prognostications on paper and handed them to the rajah. After reading the paper and communicating its contents to Colonel Taylor, the rajah decided to destroy it. The secret thus remained known to only three—

the old rajah, Colonel Taylor, and the shastri. The last had foretold from the horoscope that the child just born would be cut off by a violent death at a particular age, childless. The old rajah died, and the lad mounted the throne, the shastri and the Colonel being left the sole depositaries of the terrible secret. The Mutiny broke out, and the young rajah, now approaching the dangerous age, took part in it. He escaped the dangers of the battlefield; and when the Mutiny was suppressed, the active interposition of Colonel Taylor saved him, on the plea of youth, from the more serious and probable danger of being hanged for treason. He was now just about the fatal age; and when the good Colonel had had his doom commuted to temporary detention under surveillance in a distant fortress, he thought all danger over. He spoke to the old shastri and joked him about his prediction; but the old man shook his head, and said: 'What can resist fate?' Then touching his forehead, he said: 'It is written, and cannot be effaced'—alluding to the oriental notion that each one's fate is written by the finger of God on the frontal bone. He turned out a true prophet; for the young rajah, while on the way to the fortress, was accidentally killed by the discharge of his own gun. It was on the very day foretold by the shastri! Colonel Meadows Taylor was with him on the journey; and his veracity is above all suspicion. How explain this case? A singular coincidence, you will say. Very well. Here is another, where coincidence is out of court altogether.

Years ago I was present at a rare scene, while visiting a native gentleman of rank. He had just received the welcome news that he would at the distance of some months have another olive branch in his house. He sent at once for a fortune-teller; and the future was forecast in my presence. The man came—one of the class called 'Rammálls,' that is, fortune-tellers by means of dice or 'raml.' Their dice are peculiar. They consisted of a set of three; each one consisting, in its turn, of a number of cubical dice (I forget, at this distance of time, if they were six or seven) strung together on a slender metal rod. Each cube was made of brass, and had cabalistic figures on each of its four exposed surfaces. Through the other two surfaces the rod passed, and on it each cube—two of its sides almost touching the next two—revolved freely, and independently of the other cubes. The man having made his salaam, sat down, as desired, on the edge of the carpet, on which we were all seated.

'Do you know why I sent for you?' asked my friend. The Rammáll made no reply; but producing his three long dice, or rather sets of dice, he handed them to my friend to cast. For this purpose, he laid them side by side in the open palm of his right hand, the fingers being slightly curved. With a gentle but quick motion, alternately advancing and retiring his

hand, he caused the dice to roll, now wristward, and now fingersward, on his hand. Shaking them thus for a few seconds—both the absolute and the relative positions of the cubes and their surfaces necessarily changing at each roll—he at length cast them on the carpet on which we were sitting. As he did this with some violence and to a little distance, the dice rolled a good deal before they came to a final rest. The fortune-teller gathered them up together, carefully avoiding any disarrangement of the order and position of the cubes or their surfaces. He placed the three sets of dice on the carpet before himself, and seemed, after carefully examining the cast of the dice, to go into deep thought and complicated calculations.

Let us see. There were, say, six cubes on each of the three slender rods, and each cube had four marked surfaces. There were therefore seventy-two surfaces, to combine in sets of six exposed surfaces on each rod; and these, again, with the positions of planets and other fortune-telling matters. The number, therefore, of the possible combinations (not permutations) is practically as limitless as are the eventualities of human life.

After a while, the Rammáll said: 'You wish to consult me regarding your "House"—meaning, of course, my friend's wife. Both being Mohammedans, etiquette did not allow a more direct allusion to the lady. My friend, admitting that he had guessed rightly (and thus far it might easily have been a good guess and no more), again took up the proffered dice, and went with them into the private apartments of the house to get the lady's cast. A Mohammedan gentleman's wife is never shown to any of the opposite sex except the nearest relatives. The fortune-teller meanwhile took his 'tasbeeh' or rosary off his wrist, and began telling the names of God in Arabic on his beads. The lady having made a cast as her husband had done, he carefully brought back the dice undisturbed to the fortune-teller. The rosary was replaced round the wrist; and the Rammáll examined the dice carefully. He produced and consulted a self-made almanac, the sun, moon, stars, and planets all coming in for their share of questioning. He took paper, pen, and ink, and made calculations. After about a quarter of an hour's work, he read out the results: (1) The lady would give birth to a child—(2) Who would be a daughter (not so welcome an addition to oriental families as a son)—(3) On a day which he named, and which was yet over seven months off. (4) The child would die within five months after its birth; and (5) she would be his last child; but why, he could not (or would not) tell, as in the ordinary course of nature my friend might expect several more.

The man was paid a sum of money, and went his way. Months passed. The child was born on the day foretold; proved to be a daughter; died a week after completing its fourth month of life; and my friend himself died within the year. All the five predictions were effectively fulfilled. Such a complicated series of verified coincidences or guesses would be as wonderful at least as the man's having somehow got the knowledge of the future.

I shall describe, until tyrant with t About related the wel right-h Those anchori at body, w to obey presen death, He sub ciples became his bre Euro the he was was pri closed, ring, in an window day an Genera rain ca went t friends not to in Ru uncove its sea jooghee He wa but the broug which public as he perfect life! forme his d such inqui Ru was b his hi that l upon Each the d tyrant specta cauti mand live gratif comm Wi Succi hiber found

Of a different kind is my next instance, which I shall give briefly, as it has been several times described—the strange case of suspended animation, under the Maharajah Runjeet Sing, the late tyrant of the Punjab. My first acquaintance with the narrative dates from my boyhood. About the time of the occurrence I heard it related by my father; and his authority was the well-known General Avitable, Runjeet Sing's right-hand man, who was present at the facts. Those facts are, that a certain 'joghee' (Hindu anchorite), said to possess the power of suspending at will and resuming the animation of his body, was sent for by Runjeet Sing, and declining to obey, was brought by force into the tyrant's presence, and ordered to give, under pain of death, a practical proof of his supposed power. He submitted perforce. He was put by his disciples through certain processes, during which he became perfectly unconscious; the pulses ceased, his breath did not stain a polished mirror, and a European doctor who was present declared that the heart had ceased to beat. To all appearances, he was as dead as Queen Anne. In this state he was put into a carefully-made box, the lid was closed, and sealed with Runjeet Sing's own signet ring. The box was buried in a vault prepared in an open plot of ground under the royal windows at Lahore; and the place was guarded day and night by Runjeet's own guards under General Avitable's own supervision. Sun and rain came and grass sprung up, grew and withered on the surface over the grave; and the sentries went their rounds; and the joghee's disciples and friends were all kept under careful surveillance, not to call it imprisonment. After forty days, in Runjeet Sing's own presence the vault was uncovered, and the box extracted from it with its seals intact. It was opened, and showed the joghee within precisely as he had been placed. He was taken out, dead still, to all appearance, but the body incorrupt. His disciples were now brought to manipulate the body in the manner which he had taught them, and which he had publicly explained before his burial. He revived, as he had said he would; and was soon in as perfect health as when he had suspended his life! He refused all gifts, and retired to his former retreat; but shortly afterwards he and his disciples disappeared. It was not safe for such a man to live in the jurisdiction of so inquisitive and arbitrary a ruler.

Runjeet Sing cared little for human life, which was his toy or plaything. No one who knows his historical character will for a moment admit that he would let himself be deceived or played upon in a matter on which he had set his heart. Each scene—the suspension of life, the burial, the disinterment, the reviving, took place in the tyrant's own presence, and before hundreds of spectators, in open daylight, and with every precaution that absolute despotic power could command. Runjeet cared little whether the man lived or died, so that his own curiosity was gratified. The guards under the palace windows commanded by Avitable would be anxious solely to carry out Runjeet's Sing's wishes.

Will you say it is impossible? Remember Succi's fast, last spring. Do not some animals hibernate for months? Are not living toads found in solid stone hundreds of years after

their entombment? With the suspended animation of these toads in evidence, it will not do to set down the story as simply impossible. And it may be added that in India no one would think of calling in question the accuracy and truth of the narrative.

There are jugglers and jugglers, who perform the celebrated mango trick—the mango being a luscious Indian fruit, in perfection in July and August. The ordinary juggler causes a miserable mango tree, a stunted abortion, like a small branch, to grow out of a handful of earth from a seed deposited there before you, and covered with a sheet. And from this, in half an hour's time, he produces a mango more or less ripe, which you can eat, but which is evidently not fresh. Such performances are generally done so clumsily that ordinary observation will enable you to detect the sleight-of-hand practised. The real mango trick is quite a different affair. It was once performed in the veranda of my own house, in March, myself and three other incredulous and sharp-eyed persons witnessing the whole, seated in a little semicircle, at the centre of which was placed a large flower-pot, filled freshly with earth out of our own garden. The juggler mixed something with the earth, and in it planted a dry mango seed. He watered it, and covered it—placed about six feet from us—with a square sheet of long cloth. He and his only attendant then proceeded to perform, a few yards off, many other astonishing feats of jugglery, for the remainder of the audience, and we four confined our attention to the mango, determined that no deception should take place. We noticed the sheet gradually rising in the middle, as if pushed up from below with a stick. Higher and higher: it is now about eight inches above the flower-pot. The juggler approaches the sheet, and seizing two of its corners, without at all touching the pot, draws off the sheet carefully right under our eyes. There is the young shoot of a mango plant, with its stiff stem, and four little glistening leaves—apparently about a week old. He recasts the sheet over pot and plant, and we see that he touched neither. He returns to his performances, and we continue our watch. Higher it rises and higher—it is now about two feet high, and the sheet shows a rounded dome-like shape. Again he removes the sheet; and behold a young plant, like a two-year-old mango tree—a real though dwarf tree. He again covers it, and we continue our watch. Higher it rises and higher. When about four feet high, he again uncovers the mystery, and shows a mango tree with two small green fruitlings on it. When next uncovered, it has two fine ripe mangoes. Now touching it for the first time, he plucks and hands us the mangoes, which we cut and eat, and find good and fresh as the best. The tree is then plucked up, handled and examined by us—a genuine dwarf tree—root, stem, bark, branches, leaves, all complete, as real as the mangoes we eat! Remember, four acute-eyed, incredulous, suspicious Europeans, watching the whole thing during the whole time (nearly an hour), and attending to nothing else; the performer an almost naked native, with only a loin-cloth on; the flower-pot right under our eyes, no one touching it during the whole time; in our own veranda, and in broad

daylight. All the stock objections of sleight-of-hand, optical delusion, &c., fail in this case, to my own certain knowledge; and others can vouch for its not being a very rare thing in India.

But how explain it? Are there hidden forces in Nature, of which some succeed in learning the secret, and utilise their knowledge to work what seems an impossibility or a wonder? Do not gardeners force early plants? Do not the Chinese grow miniature forest trees, showing every sign of premature but fully-developed old age in a dwarf body? Who can dogmatise as to what is or is not impossible in nature?

From several quarters I heard of, but did not myself see, what does appear an impossible feat; this, therefore, I give on mere hearsay evidence. A juggler 'pitches' at a corner of a bazaar or wide street; and in the presence of a gaping crowd which speedily assembles to witness the 'tamasha' or fun, he takes out of his wallet a large ball of twine, and tying one end of it to a corner of the wallet, casts the ball up, skywards, with all his might. Up it goes, unwinding gradually—up and out of sight. It does not come back; it has unfolded itself on, into the blue sky, it seems. He orders his attendant—a small boy, possibly his own son, and about eight years of age—to 'go up.' The boy grasps the twine, and goes hand over hand, up, up, and out of sight. Remember, please, that Indian houses are low, and that it needs but little sense to see whether a ball of twine has been thrown in a common way on and over a neighbouring house, or has unaccountably gone up into the sky without coming down; whether a small boy has by means of this twine gone on to a house-top, or has disappeared into the heavens as unaccountably as the twine did.

After a number of ordinary tricks, the juggler declares he needs the boy's help, and looking upwards, calls him by name. A voice replies from a distance above, saying he will not come down. (*Ventriloquism*, you suggest. Very well; perhaps so: wait.) The man gets angry, says the boy must be punished; and taking a long knife between his teeth, he goes up the twine hand over hand, as the boy had done before, and apparently disappears in his turn into the sky. A scream is heard above. Then, to the horror of the spectators, drops of blood rain down; and then the child falls, dismembered, with his few clothes cut, and covered with blood. The man then slides down the twine, with the knife all bloody at his waist. He casts a sheet over the mangled remains of the child, and leisurely proceeds to wrap up into a ball the twine which comes down to him by degrees from the sky, as if there were a kite at the end of it. He puts his things into the wallet and then takes up the sheet. From under it, whole and intact, alive and grinning, rises up the identical small boy! There are no mangled remains, and no blood! On this I make only one remark: the thing itself seems really impossible, yet that does not prove that the performance is not actually done. The paradox may possibly find its resolution in the 'suggestive experiences' of hypnotism. A hypnotised patient sees and feels what his hypnotiser wishes him to see and feel. Is it possible to hypnotise

a whole crowd? If so, and the crowd thereupon proceeds to see what the juggler or hypnotiser desires them to see, a great many of the wonders of Indian magic would be thus explained.

A ROMANCE OF MIDDLE AGE.

By ETHEL IRELAND.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

'SABRINA, I think I ought to tell you something that has been weighing on my mind for some time. If you will go into the garden, I will follow you presently.' And the speaker, Miss Elizabeth Power, slipped out of the room with unusual and, as her sister thought, most indecorous haste.

Miss Sabrina and Miss Elizabeth Power were old maiden ladies. I use the word 'old' to express an air of gentle antiquity which clung to them, telling not of old age, but of old ideas, old customs, and old courtesies.

Though Miss Sabrina was only fifty-three, and Miss Elizabeth but forty, both sisters seemed to belong to some past generation. They had no place among the hurrying men and women of the present day. Sunnybank Cottage and the garden which surrounded it possessed an atmosphere of tranquillity that can only exist where peace and simplicity have their dwelling. It was truly 'an old garden' into which Miss Sabrina walked that evening with slow and dignified steps, that expressed tacit disapproval of her sister's more hurried gait.

A hedge of honeysuckle flanked one side of the garden, and the other side was protected from the curious eyes of passers-by by a high ivy-clad wall. Miss Sabrina could remember the time when the trees that now stood higher than the house itself had been young saplings; but that was long ago. Dark-eyed pansies, old-fashioned stocks, pinks and poppies—these and other flowers filled the irregular beds; and daisies sprinkled the oblong plot of grass that lay in front of the porch.

The garden was situated on the side of a hill. Below it lay the village. Gray and peaceful it looked, nestling at the feet of the great hills that sloped down to it on every side, shutting it in from the world. Purple and gray they rose, one slope above another, till they were lost among the clouds. Only to the west they broke slightly, leaving an open space, through which glimmered the waters of the distant lake, Graymere. And the evening sun shone with a splendour of crimson and gold, filling the gap with its amber glory.

It was on a June evening that Miss Sabrina stood by the laburnum tree awaiting the coming of her sister. She had a peaceful face, straight-featured, and pale as ivory. Her gray hair was parted smoothly over a calm brow, and she wore a lace cap with mauve ribbons. As she stood with her hands folded in front of her,

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an atmosphere of restfulness seemed to emanate from her whole personality—not the repose of one who has never struggled, but such peace as only comes after many a hard battle fought and won.

Ever since her parents' death and the marriage of her second sister, Miss Sabrina had lived with her sister Elizabeth, and never until that evening had there been the shadow of a concealment between the sisters. Miss Elizabeth's simple thoughts and wishes had been ever laid at her sister's feet in perfect confidence; and Miss Sabrina had been worthy of the trust. And now, to find that Elizabeth had been concealing something, and, from her manner, evidently something important, caused her a sharper pang than she would have cared to own. She stealthily brushed away a tear as she turned to meet her sister.

Demurely raising her black silk gown, Miss Elizabeth crossed the gravel path, and walked over with slow mincing steps to where her sister stood, thereby offering a silent apology for her recent undignified conduct. There was something charmingly incongruous about the little lady that it would be hard to account for, unless, perhaps, it was caused by the youthfulness of her face and the antiquity of her costume. Certainly the two side-curls of glossy brown hair looked out of place beside her fresh cheeks, and the sombre gown in its stern simplicity seemed unsuited to her slender figure. I have never seen girl or woman since with a more ingenuous countenance; and probably any girl in her teens nowadays knows more of the world than that dainty lady knew at forty. That night, Miss Elizabeth's eyes were a trifle cast down as she met her sister's glance of perplexed inquiry.

'What a beautiful evening it is—is it not, Sabrina?' she remarked, somewhat irrelevantly, as dark clouds were rising up around the sun. 'Shall we walk about, or would you rather sit down?'

'Thank you, sister. I prefer to be seated. I shall then be able to pay more attention to what you have to tell me,' answered Miss Sabrina, sternly bringing her sister to the point.

'Very well,' assented the other, with a little sigh. So together they walked to the summer-house, which stood in a shady corner, and in silence they seated themselves on two garden chairs.

'Well, Elizabeth?' said Miss Sabrina, in rather chilly tones, after a few moments' silence.

'Yes—yes, dear Sabrina—only, do not hurry me,' pleaded her sister nervously. 'You see, Sabrina, I really could not tell you before, for I might have been making a mistake, and that would have put me in a most distressing position; but to-day I really felt there was no longer any doubt of it, because he—' Then realising that she was talking rather incoherently, she stopped, and with a blush, turned to pick one of the white roses that had stolen in at the tiny lattice window. Pathos and comedy were closely allied in the love confidences of this elderly maiden; but Miss Sabrina did not see anything amusing in her sister's words. Her nature was one in which lay much tenderness,

but it was concealed beneath a certain coldness of manner that a stranger might have shrunk from. But those who really knew her understood. It was in no winning tones that she begged her sister to be more explicit.

'Yes, Sabrina; I will try,' responded Miss Elizabeth obediently. 'Well, for some time I have fancied that Dr Meadows has—'

'Has what, Elizabeth?' inquired Sabrina sharply.

'Well, sister, has—been very kind to me.'

'Oh—precise and prolonged. 'He has also been very kind to me, Elizabeth; but I do not find that his kindness weighs on my mind.' She was determined that her sister should speak plainly, however hard she might find it.

'No, of course not,' and Miss Elizabeth laughed nervously. 'But, dear Sabrina, I fancy, in fact I may almost say I know, that his kindness to me is a little different. He is so remarkably kind. To-day, I was coming up from the village, and I met him just at the corner of Birtle Lane. He turned and walked up beside me, and actually persisted in carrying my basket, Sabrina.'

'How overpoweringly kind!' said Miss Sabrina sarcastically.—'Anything more?'

'Yes, yes. I am coming to it, if you will only give me a little time,' implored her sister. 'As I was saying, he carried my basket; and, Sabrina, he made me take his arm. I really was not sure whether it was proper in the daytime and all the neighbours about; but I could not refuse. When we got to the top of the hill, he asked me if I would go for a little stroll in the wood.—I was afraid you might not approve,' she added timidly, hearing a dissatisfied cough from Sabrina; 'but, you know, I could not say, "Thank you; I am afraid Sabrina might not like it," though it would have been quite true; so what could I do?'

Miss Sabrina vouchsafed no answer; so Miss Elizabeth hurried on. 'So, when we had been walking a little time, he said we would sit down for a little. If you remember, Sabrina—but I hardly think you will—I had pinned a pink in my brooch. Well, Dr Meadows asked me if I would give it to him. "Oh yes, Dr Meadows," I said, "if you care for it; but you know you have plenty of the same kind in your own garden." "Yes," he said; "but I should like this one particularly, Miss Elizabeth;" and really, Sabrina, he looked quite handsome, and you know he is not strictly good-looking. So I unpinned it and handed it to him; and—I am afraid it was dreadfully improper—but he held my hand and said, "Miss Elizabeth—Elizabeth!"'

'Was that all?' inquired Sabrina, still coldly.

'Yes, it was; because just then Mr and Mrs Birkett came into sight, and of course we got up; and as they were behind us all the way home, Dr Meadows had no chance of finishing what he was going to say.'

'Did Mr and Mrs Birkett walk so closely behind you that Dr Meadows could not continue his conversation?' said Sabrina, still determined not to see what her sister was driving at.

'No, no, Sabrina,' expostulated the little lady; 'but he could hardly say anything very confidential when they were looking on; and I really do think—tremulously—that he was going to say something very important.'

'In fact, Elizabeth, you think that Dr Meadows was going to make you an offer of marriage?'

'Well, Sabrina, I really do.'

'Then let me tell you, Elizabeth,' said Miss Sabrina, rising from her chair and standing before her sister, 'I believe you to be entirely mistaken. In the first place, Dr Meadows has only been a widower for three years; further, he is a man of the world, and extremely rich—all of which facts make it improbable, nay, *impossible* that he should dream of marrying a comparatively poor old maid.' Miss Sabrina threw a cruel emphasis on the last three words, and Elizabeth covered beneath the dread sentence.

Miss Power did not wish to be cruel; but she had known such dreams as Miss Elizabeth was now indulging in, and though they had seemed very near realisation, in the end they had proved but dreams, and the waking a dread nightmare. So, in speaking as she did, her true motive was to spare her sister further pain, for it was, as she said, very improbable that the rich doctor should think of a middle-aged lady, old-fashioned and simple, when he had every chance of winning a young and beautiful bride, had he the mind to do so. Did it cost her no pain to see her sister, her little sister, blanch and quiver at the hard bare truth? Had you seen her face as she stood there with the lurid, cloud-darkened sunlight throwing her tall figure into strong relief, you would have seen in it a look of anguish too deep for tears—of sorrow more bitter than the sorrow of blighted hopes.

The pain we willingly inflict for the sake of another's welfare cuts the giver more than the receiver, and there is no part more hard to play than that of an earthly providence.

With tears quivering on her eyelashes, Miss Elizabeth looked up piteously. 'But, Sabrina, what else could he mean?'

'Nothing else. The mistake you made was in thinking he meant anything at all. I ask you if you candidly think you have enough attractions to warrant such a supposition?'

'Well, Sabrina, I used to be considered pretty,' sobbed Miss Elizabeth.

'Pretty at twenty does not mean pretty at forty, Elizabeth. Believe me, you are mistaken, and be thankful that you did not commit yourself in any way.'

Bitter as Miss Sabrina's task was, she would finish it without flinching, though at that moment she could have gathered up her little sister in her arms and wept over her.

'Then, Sabrina, do you think that we had better give up our acquaintance with him?'

'No, no, Elizabeth—nothing of the sort. He has been a very good friend to us, and I should not like to lose his friendship. All you have to do is to be a little reserved and distant with him. Men are like bees, sister; they fly from one blossom to another, sucking a little honey here and there; and if they do settle on any particular flower, you may be sure it will be a gorgeous one. Always remember that, my dear, and never allow yourself to be led again into such meaningless sentimentalism.'

'I suppose you are right, Sabrina. I will try to think no more about it, if you will only assure me that you do not think I led him on to say more than he meant. I could not bear

to be thought immodest,' faltered Miss Elizabeth.

'No, sister,' replied Miss Power, while a rare and tender smile softened her whole face, 'I do not think anything of the sort. I only think you have made a mistake—a thing we are all apt to do, my dear. Let us say no more about it.' And she walked slowly down the path and into the house, stopping to look down into the valley, where the blue reeks of smoke rose up through the still air.

'Cruel only to be kind!' The words rang in her ears, but they brought little consolation to her heart, and the remembrance of her sister's tear-stained face followed her into her cool bedroom with its dimity hangings.

When Miss Elizabeth was left alone, she crushed the rose she had plucked and let it fall to the ground. Her hopes, her late-begotten romance, the dreams of home-life and happiness, so natural to every true woman—all these were at an end. She was no heroine, only a simple old maid; yet, sitting there in the gathering twilight, weeping softly over the wreck of her rosy dreams, she made a picture of infinite pathos, terribly real in its calm resignation and absence of all youthful passion and rebellion.

An hour or two later, the sisters sat at their usual game of piquet in the old-fashioned parlour, with its high-backed chairs and sombre sideboard. No sign betrayed their recent painful conversation; but it was a secret relief to each when Miss Elizabeth won the game with a 'carte-blanche.'

'How unusual!' said Miss Sabrina, rather wearily as she laid the pack in the old fern-covered box. 'Not a single coloured card!'

'No,' responded Miss Elizabeth sadly—'not a single coloured card, Sabrina.'

For a minute or two the sisters sat without speaking.

'How hard life is!' thought Miss Sabrina; and 'How hard life is!' thought Miss Elizabeth.

'I will have my cocoa in my bedroom, Elizabeth,' remarked Miss Sabrina after a pause, during which the clock ticked peacefully on the mantel-shelf. 'Good-night, my dear; you can have your supper here, or in your bedroom too, whichever you prefer; and kissing her sister's cheek, she left the room.

When Miss Elizabeth heard the door of Sabrina's bedroom click to, she rose, put out the lamp, and with a parting stroke of unconscious pussy, she, too, went to her bedroom.

Neither sister had any supper, but each thought of the other comfortably sipping her cocoa in 'deshabille.'

'Most annoying, most annoying,' muttered good Dr Meadows as he closed the wicket gate after Miss Elizabeth Power and walked down the quiet lane. He was a massive-looking man, about forty-five, with iron-gray hair, and a square clean-shaven chin. Like most north-country men, he was slow to form likes and dislikes; but when a feeling once took possession of him, it clung to him with great tenacity. Ever since the first few months after the death of his first wife he had watched Miss Elizabeth with increasing solicitude. His first marriage, late in life, had been an unsatisfactory one. Like

many men whom necessity has kept hard at the grindstone during early manhood, prohibiting all thoughts of marriage for the time, he had been at thirty-nine very susceptible to woman's charm, and falling in love with a London belle, whose finances were scarcely sufficient to supply her in gaieties and trinkets, had married, fondly believing in the disinterestedness of his wife's affection, never dreaming that his hardly-earned 'ducats' could have any intrinsic value in her eyes. But he woke from his dream of love to find his wife extravagant, rapacious for gaiety, and utterly unsuited to settle down to comfortable domestic life as the wife of a country doctor. But no one ever guessed the shadow that darkened his life. To outward eyes he was a kind affectionate husband; and Clara Meadows had no reason to complain of his inconsiderateness or tyranny. The absence of that loving homage which sanctifies marriage did not affect her, and she was quite content while her whims were gratified without interference on her husband's part.

When, three years after their marriage, his wife was killed in a railway accident, Dr Meadows could not pretend to feel any passionate grief or remorse. He simply laid the past aside quietly; and when Miss Elizabeth's gentle personality began to fill his thoughts, he held it no slight to his dead wife, between himself and whom there had never been any deep and lasting attachment. He was not a bold man, or one that would ride over any obstacle without hesitation, and he had waited till all seemed smooth for his suit. To have made up his mind to an actual declaration of his feelings meant a great moral and mental effort; and as he walked home on that June afternoon, the relaxation that follows on the heels of any effort began to make itself felt. He was almost thankful that he had been spared the ordeal, for his was no fiery passion of youth, eager to secure the beloved object, but the steady flame of mature affection, that can wait without the fever-heats of delayed happiness. Doubts came over him as he sat in his study that evening.

'I have no attractions,' he thought. 'Why should I imagine that any woman can care for me now? Ought I to try to turn the current of that calm life? If, in seeking love, I lose friendship, I shall indeed have made a fatal mistake.' So he pondered over the long churchwarden that was his only companion during the long evenings. At last he came to the conclusion that the matter should be decided by Miss Elizabeth's manner to him at their next meeting.

'If,' he thought, 'she receives me kindly and with some little embarrassment, which I may reasonably expect, should she feel able to return affection, I shall conclude all is well, for she cannot now fail to have understood my feelings towards her, and I will then speak more plainly. But if she treats me with any assumption of reserve or coldness, I shall simply let the matter drop, and cling all the more closely to our pleasant friendship.'

I believe in the bottom of his heart Dr Meadows had a secret conviction that Miss Elizabeth would not be averse to his suit, for his eyes wandered round the room with an expression of serene satisfaction, and he smoothed the rumpled

antimacassar on the sofa, thinking, I feel sure, of the little hands that loved so well to straighten all disorder and smooth away all pain and sorrow.

'ROAD-AGENTS.'

TRAVELLING into the Black Hills on a Pullman sleeper to-day presents a marked contrast to the manner we came in, in the old times, when the nearest railroad was two hundred and fifty miles from Deadwood. But what memories are stirred up within the breasts of those pioneers who fought Indians, braved hardships, encountered 'road-agents,' or highwaymen, as they are called in more civilised countries, and lived on bacon, game, and slap-jacks! Yes, the old days are gone, never to return; so are the road-agents or stage-robbers; and the visitor now can listen to the yarns of the old-timers as he travels to and fro comfortably seated in the cars without feeling his hair raise the hat off his head, as would have been the case in years gone by. He feels no nervousness now as his informant tells him of Lame Johnny, who was hanged near this railroad station; and of Jim Wall and Dunc Blackburn, who often hid for days in the woods, back of the town which is now the terminus of the railroad. He can laugh, too, at the idea of a stage-company hiring these very men to refrain from attacking the coaches, which, strange as it may seem, is an actual fact. The company made money by doing so, too, because, while the coaches on the other roads were held-up, sometimes every night for a week at a time, this company's gained the reputation of being the safest to travel by, and consequently got the most of the passengers, besides many thousand dollars in gold-dust.

One of the favourite stories told of the exploits of road-agents is that relating to the mysterious killing of a stage-driver named Johnny Slaughter within four miles of Deadwood in April 1877. The coach had left Cheyenne, on the Union Pacific Railroad, about three hundred miles distant from Deadwood, with a full load of male passengers, many of them on their first trip in the West. Some old-timers who occupied outside seats had enlivened the long tedious journey across the plains of Wyoming by relating stories of hair-breadth escapes from Indians and road-agents, until the nerves of the pilgrims or 'tenderfeet' were strung to the highest pitch. As they found their journey nearing its end without accident, they regained their usual flow of spirits; and when, fifty miles from Deadwood, Johnny Slaughter took the reins, each one was ready to persuade himself that the old-timers had been yarning to them. Usually, a Western stage-driver takes a delight in keeping the ball rolling, so far as working on the nervousness of his male passengers, by corroborating every story they have told to them, no matter how far-fetched the narrative may be. But in this instance the ribbons were handled by a man whose reputation was—that he always tried to allay any fears his passengers might entertain. He had driven stage in the mountains and on the plains so long without molestation, was so fearless himself and light-hearted, although he knew perfectly well that many a desperado had

threatened to 'do him up' if a good chance presented, that his presence on the driver's seat seemed to impart confidence to the most timid of his passengers. It was generally believed that if Johnny's coach was ever 'held-up,' he would never stop unless wounded or killed outright. In this particular he was differently constituted from most stage-drivers, who usually throw on the brake and stop the team at the first order to 'halt,' considering that they are not paid to take chances of being shot.

No wonder, then, that this coach-load, who had all heard of Johnny Slaughter, should have been enjoying the last fifty miles of their long ride more than any other portion of the journey. The scenery was becoming more picturesque and varied as the road wound in snake-like twists and sharp curves along the banks of a swiftly-running mountain stream, or over the top of a rugged rocky mountain, or through dense pine forests, and across beautiful natural parks, having every appearance of the watchful care of the professional forester. Daylight was giving place to dusky twilight as the coach neared the mouth of Gold Run Gulch, one of the tributaries of Whitewood Creek, on which Deadwood is located, when, without the least note of warning, the report of a rifle-shot reverberated through the canon, and Johnny Slaughter fell from his seat, pierced through the heart by the assassin's bullet. His reputation for never halting did not desert him at this critical moment, for, as he fell, he passed the reins to the passenger seated beside him. The team, four spirited, half-broken mustangs, took fright at the shot, and started to run at the top of their speed. In a short time the coach-load of frightened passengers stopped at the stage office, where the usual crowd of frontiersmen were gathered to see its arrival. The word was passed that Johnny Slaughter lay near the mouth of Gold Run pierced by a bullet. In an incredibly short space of time a posse of well-armed determined men had started on horseback to avenge his death, and others in a wagon to fetch in his body. It was found that the cruel bullet had pierced his heart, and caused almost instantaneous death. But no trace of his murderer has ever been discovered. A thorough search was made on the night of the murder, as well as a thorough canvass of the whereabouts of the desperadoes to whom the finger of suspicion might point. The assassination is to-day, more than thirteen years after its occurrence, still enshrouded in mystery.

Funny incidents, as well as sad and tragical like the foregoing, we can also call to mind in reviewing the exploits of the road-agent. One night in '79 the court stenographer for the Black Hills District was returning from a visit to the States, and the agents halted the coach. He was a very small man, and in order to enjoy a talk with the driver, had climbed to the seat next to that dignitary. His feet would not reach the footboard of the boot, so, to prevent any sudden lurch of the coach from unseating him, the friendly driver had passed a red sursingle around his chest under his arms and buckled it at the back of the seat. When the 'halt' was given, the short stenographer was noticed by the robber who demanded the mail-sacks and treasure-box—or pie-box, as we used to call this. 'Never mind

getting down, Bubby'—a favourite expression used when addressing a young boy in the West—'we ain't making war on kids, so you can stay where you are.' This offended the dignity of the court official, who resented the remark by answering: 'If I had a gun I would show you that I am no kid.'—'Well, then,' was the robber's reply, 'if that is so, just hand down your watch and money, and be lively about it too.' This demand was quickly complied with, for the glistening barrel of a heavy revolver in the hands of the road-agent pointed directly at the little fellow's breast was a powerful persuader. Several months afterwards, this very watch was the means of convicting one of that gang, and sending him to the penitentiary.

At another time, an Eastern man, with more courage than discretion, when told to alight from the inside of a coach, commenced shooting at the brawny thief who was searching the passengers, with a small pocket-pistol, the report from which sounded like the noise made by the small boys' fireworks on Guy Fawkes's day. 'If one of those pills hits me, and I find it out,' said the road-agent, as he unconcernedly proceeded with his search of another passenger's clothing, 'it will go hard with you.'

Evidently, these stage-robbers of our own day had read of the gallantry of Dick Turpin and Claude Duval in their treatment of ladies, for it was no unusual occurrence for these modern knights of the stage-road to demand a kiss in consideration of allowing lady passengers to pass on without loss of jewellery and pocket-book. Of course, the sheriff's officers and guards employed by the different companies used every effort to hunt down and arrest the desperadoes who made life such a troubled dream for the passengers; but in the then sparsely-settled condition of the country this was a very hazardous and difficult undertaking. Nor were the road-agents without friends, although most of those friends were rendered so by compulsion; because living at lonely farms, ranches, and stage stations, it was to their interest to be friendly, or at least keep quiet, in order to save their homes and stables from repeated raids by the freebooters. But this state of affairs is now a thing of the past, as much so as the buffalo, bear, and hostile Indian.

THE RIVER.

For centuries oceanward it has flowed on,
Through moorland wild, beneath the hills' great feet,
Past orchards rich, and flowered meadows sweet,
Singing its happy lay; the sun has shone
In silver splendour o'er it, and the moon
Has blazoned silver etchings here and there
Upon its glancing waters; the soft air
Has crisped it, and the winds made sullen moan
Above it, like weird spirits seeking rest.
So flows my life through scenes of joy and woe:
Around me now sweet summer flowers blow,
And now I seem the dreary desert's guest;
Yet, like the river, ever on I move
To the vast ocean of Eternal Love.

WILLIAM COWAN.

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